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Message Text

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PAGE 01 RIYADH 00393 231947Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 /026 W
----------005483 231954Z /50
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FM USLO RIYADH
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 215
INFO AMEMBSY JIDDA NIACT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L USLO RIYADH 393

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAFS: OVIP (CARTER, JIMMY)
SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL VISIT - RIYADH SCHEDULE

REF STATE 301484

1. LATE LAST NIGHT (DECEMBER 22) I HAD FURTHER DISCUSSION WITH ROYAL PROTOCOL ABOUT SCHEDULE FOR PRESIDENT'S VISIT IN RIYADH AS PROPOSED REFTEL. IT WAS MY THIRD SUCH MEETING IN TWO DAYS. AT THIS POINT SCHEDULE PROPOSED BY WHITE HOUSE AND THAT PROPOSED BY ROYAL PROTOCOL ARE IN ACCORD ON ALL MAJOR POINTS WITH THE EXCEPTION OF MINOR DIFFERENCES IN TIMING, SPECIFICALLY OVER TIME FOR DINNER. I BELIEVE IT FUTILE TO ARGUE FURTHER OVER THIS POINT. MY EXPERIENCE HAS BEEN THAT DINNER WILL BEGIN WHEN THE SAUDIS WISH EVEN IF THEY WERE TO AGREE TO PUT A DIFFERENT TIME IN THE PROGRAM SINCE BY COURT PROCEDURE PRESIDENT WILL NOT DEPART GUEST PALACE UNTIL WORD IS RECEIVED FROM KING THAT HE IS PREPARED TO RECEIVE PRESIDENT. THEREFORE, I RECOMMEND THE WHITE HOUSE AGREE TO FOLLOWING SCHEDULE TO ENABLE US TO PROCEED WITH PLANS:

2. PROPOSED SCHEDULE (AS AGREED TO BY SAUDIS - DECEMBER 22)
JANUARY 3, 1977
1610 ARRIVE RIYADH
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1640 MOTORCADE DEPARTS AIRPORT TO PALACE
1655 MOTORCADE ARRIVES PALACE
1700 PRIVATE TIME
1730 TALKS WITH KING
1845 PROCEED TO DINNER
1900 DINNER
2000 DINNER CONCLUDES; PROCEED TO EXPANDED MEETINGS

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2000 EXPANDED MEETINGS BEGIN AT GUEST PALACE
2100 MEETINGS CONCLUDE

JANUARY 4, 1977
0825 MOTORCADE DEPARTS TO AIRPORT
0840 MOTORCADE ARRIVES
0900 WHEELS UP TO PARIS

3. COMMENTS: UNDER SCHEDULE PROPOSED ABOVE, DINNER REMAINS AT 7:00 P.M. AS ORIGINALLY PROPOSED BY SAUDIS. I BELIEVE IT WILL BE DIFFICULT FOR SAUDIS TO CHANGE THIS. EVEN THOUGH I HAVE REPEATEDLY REMINDED THEM AT EVERY MEETING THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO AGREEMENT ON THE PRESIDENT'S SCHEDULE, THE PALACE HAS ALREADY INVITED SAUDI GUESTS. I HAVE LEARNED FROM SAUDI FRIENDS THAT INSTRUCTIONS WERE ISSUED TO PARTICIPANTS TO BE AT PALACE NO LATER THAT 6:30 IN ORDER THAT THEY BE IN PLACE WELL BEFORE PRESIDENT ARRIVES. FYI, SAUDIS WOULD FIND IT DIFFICULT TO ARRIVE EARLIER BECAUSE THEY ARE AT PRAYER UNTIL 5:30 AND THEN MUST GATHER FROM ALL PARTS OF TOWN. ALSO SAUDIS WISH TO HOLD TO LATER TIME BECAUSE THEY KNOW THERE WILL BE A TRAFFIC CONGESTION PROBLEM AT KING'S RESIDENCE AND THEY ALSO ADMIT THAT NOT ALL OF THE SAUDI GUESTS WILL ARRIVE ON TIME.

4. STATE DINNERS IN SAUDI ARABIA ARE UNIQUE AND SOME COMMENT ABOUT THEM MAY EASE THE WHITE HOUSE'S PROBLEM WITH A 7:00 DINNER. DINNERS, WHILE NOT RUSHED, DO NOT LAST LONG. THEY ARE NOT A
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TIME FOR SOCIALIZING - ONLY FOR EATING. THERE ARE NO REMARKS BEFORE OR AFTER DINNER BY EITHER THE KING OR THE PRESIDENT. FOOD MOST LIKELY WILL ALREADY BE ON THE TABLE WHEN GUESTS ARRIVE. DINNER, IN SHORT, WILL MOVE RATHER MORE QUICKLY THAN THOSE IN OTHER COUNTRIES.

5. SECONDLY, ROYAL PROTOCOL HAS ASSURED ME THAT THE CROWN PRINCE WILL IMMEDIATELY TAKE LEAVE OF HIS MAJESTY FOLLOWING THE PRESIDENT'S DEPARTURE AND FOLLOW PRESIDENT TO GUEST PALACE. THERE NEED BE ONLY MINIMUM LOSS OF TIME BETWEEN END OF DINNER AND BEGINNING OF TALKS. TRAVEL TIME BETWEEN THE KING'S RESIDENCE (SITE OF DINNER) AND GUEST PALACE (SITE OF TALKS) IS LESS THAN 5 MINUTES.
GNEHM

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